

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5885

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0015

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US

SUBJECT: CALL ON LAO PRIME MINISTER, KAYSONE PHOMVIHAN

REF: A. VIENTIANE 0011

B. VIENTIANE 0014

SUMMARY. KAYSONE PHOMVIHAN RECEIVED ME IN A FRIENDLY MANNER, EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. ON THE BASIS OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PANCHASILA, DEMANDED A HALF TO WHAT HE CALLED "CIA SUPPORT OF TRAITOROUS LAO EXILES IN THAILAND," CALLED FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE TO BIND UP THE WOUNDS OF WAR, AND SEEMED TO BE OFFERING SOME SLIGHT HOPE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS SOLUTION OF OUR BANKING PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

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1. KAYSONE PHOMVIHAN, PRIME MINISTER OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF LAOS (PDRL) AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (LPRP), RECEIVED ME FOR COURTESY CALL OF ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES ON JANUARY 3. WE SPOKE IN FRENCH FOR THE MOST PART, ALTHOUGH HE OCCASIONALLY RESORTED TO A LAO-ENGLISH INTERPRETER WHEN HE COULD NOT RECALL A SPECIFIC FRENCH WORD. HE WAS OUTSPOKEN BUT FRIENDLY AND COURTEOUS.

2. I MADE MY USUAL BRIEF PRESENTATION ON OUR DESIRE TO MAINTAIN NORMAL RELATIONS, OUR PROMPT ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONTINUED RELATIONS WITH THE PDRL UPON ITS PROCLAMATION AND REFERENCE TO THE INDOCHINA POSITION OF PRESIDENT FORD'S DECEMBER 7 REMARKS AT THE EAST-WEST CENTER IN HONOLULU.

3. KAYSONE REPLIED THAT LAOS TOO WANTED GOOD RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PANCHASHILA BUT ALSO HAD TWO THINGS TO ASK OF THE UNITED STATES.

A. THE FIRST WAS THAT THE U.S. MUST STOP SUPPORTING THE TRAITOROUS EXILES LIKE VANG PAO WHOM CIA WAS FINANCING IN THAILAND. I SAID I THOUGHT THAT VANG PAO HAD LONG SINCE LEFT THAILAND AND THAT THE QUESTION OF ANY SUPPORT OF TRAITOROUS ACTION BY US DID NOT ARISE. HE RETURNED TO THIS ITEM A COUPLE OF TIMES. I SAID I KNEW OF NO SUCH ACTIVITY AND IF THEY HAD ANY SPECIFIC ACCUSATIONS I THOUGHT THE FOREIGN MINISTER OUGHT TO SPELL THEM OUT TO ME.

B. THE SECOND WAS THAT THE U.S. SHOULD FULFILL ITS OBLIGATION TO HELP "BIND UP THE WOUNDS OF WAR." I BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE STORY OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. MILITARY AND CIVIL ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL AT PGNU REQUEST, REFERRED AGAIN TO PRESIDENT FORD'S COMMENT ON THE NEED FOR "THE HEALING EFFECTS OF TIME" AND SAID THAT ALTHOUGH I WOULD REPORT KAYSONE'S OBSERVATIONS I HAD NO AUTHORITY TO DISCUSS ASSISTANCE MATTERS. KAYSONE SAID HE HAD CONFIDENCE IN THE "REALISM OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERICANS" AND THOUGHT THEY WOULD COME TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW SITUATION.

4. KAYSONE THEN SURPRISED ME BY SAYING HE UNDERSTOOD WE HAD SOME BANKING PROBLEMS. I TOLD HIM THAT INDEED WE DID AND THERE WAS REALLY NO REASON FOR THEM. OUR FUNDS HAD BEEN FROZEN FOR SOME TIME DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE HAD CAREFULLY EXPLAINED IN WRITING

AND IN DETAIL WHAT WAS AID MONEY AND WHAT WAS NOT. IF WE COULD GET INTO DIRECT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND/OR BANK AUTHORITIES, WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO CLARIFY THESE PROBLEMS. I SUPPOSED THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND BANK PEOPLE HAD BEEN TOO BUSY WITH BANK REORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION TO FIND TIME FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS. HE ASKED ME IF I HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND I REPLIED WE HAD DONE SO AT GREAT LENGTH AND IN WRITING. I ASKED IF HE THOUGHT I SHOULD DISCUSS THE QUESTION PERSONALLY WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRE AND HE INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT. WE SHALL HAVE TO THINK THIS ONE OVER CAREFULLY AND SEE IF WE CAN USE KAYSONE'S REFERENCE TO THIS THORNY PROBLEM TO SPARK THE SORT OF DIRECT DISCUSSION WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET FOR SO LONG.

5. COMMENT: THIS WAS MY FIRST CONVERSATION OF ANY LENGTH OR SUBSTANCE WITH KAYSONE. HE PROJECTED A COMBINATION OF AFFABILITY AND AUTHORITY. ALTHOUGH HE FOLLOWED THE PARTY LINE ON CIA AND "BINDING UP THE WOUNDS OF WAR", HE DID NOT OVERDO IT. IN SHORT HE CAME THROUGH AS HARD-BOILED BUT NOT HOSTILE. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT FOR HIM LIKE ALL HIS MINISTERS SOME FORM OF EVENTUAL U.S. ASSISTANCE IS AN "IDEE FIXE." NEITHER WAS THERE ANY DOUBT OF THE CONTINUING LAO COMMUNIST PHOBIA ABOUT ALLEGED U.S. PLOTTING WITH "THAI REACTIONARIES" AND "LAO TRAITORS."
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